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Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/212, provides an update on the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, together with actions taken by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups in advancing the implementation of sustainable development goals and targets, including through partnerships for sustainable development. The report also includes views of Member States regarding a possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 63/212, the General Assembly called for the effective implementation of the commitments, programmes and time-bound targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and for the fulfilment of the provisions relating to the means of implementation, as contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; reiterated that the Commission on Sustainable Development is the high-level body responsible for sustainable development within the United Nations system, which serves as a forum for the consideration of issues related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

2. The present report has been prepared pursuant to resolution 63/212 in order to provide an update on progress made in implementing that resolution. It should be read in conjunction with other reports submitted under the agenda item on sustainable development.

II. Overview

3. The present report is being written at the critical moment. In 2008, the world economy was affected by a succession of crises, which threaten to reverse progress on all key dimensions of sustainable development, including a slowdown in the rate of growth of the world economy, disproportionately adverse impacts on developing countries, and the rapid escalation of challenges emanating from natural resources: climate, energy, water and land. As a result, progress on the goals of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Summit has been placed in jeopardy, after steady declining trend poverty rates have begun to inch up again, the incidence of hunger and malnutrition has increased, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is threatened. On the other hand, the succession of crises has led to an enhanced political commitment to these goals.

4. A careful reading of Agenda 21 shows that the drafters viewed it (and by that token the concept of sustainable development) as a bridge between otherwise distinct and occasionally even opposing elements. Most explicitly, it is designed as a bridge between environment and development, but it is more than that. It is also a bridge between the public and private sectors (the concept of public/private partnership first emerged in the context of sustainability concerns), between Governments and civil society, between global and national goals, between current and future generations, between knowledge and action, and between developed and developing countries. As such, an assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21 has to follow two paths; the first on the stated goals of the agenda, and the second on its aspiration to bring diverse agendas together.

5. Sustainable development starts with a conundrum. In a finite planet, the continued growth in the use of materials or throughput will eventually lead to ecological disaster; but conventional economic growth is absolutely essential at least until the large differences between developed and developing countries — in incomes, quality of life, human development indicators, and levels of poverty and deprivation — are bridged. In the first instance, the concept proposes that the unfinished agenda of development be completed apace, but in a manner that

minimizes the pressure on natural resources and starts laying the foundation of the transition to a sustainable society.

6. Going beyond this level, however, it also seeks to show that the development agenda and the sustainability agenda are not in conflict. In fact, the more speedily the unfinished agenda of development and poverty eradication is completed, the more quickly can there be a transformation towards a sustainable society. As the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission report), "Our common future", puts it,

> "Growth has no set limits in terms of population or resource use beyond which lies ecological disaster. Different limits hold for the use of energy, materials, water and land. Many of these will manifest themselves in the form of rising costs and diminishing returns, rather than in the form of any sudden loss of a resource base. The accumulation of knowledge and the development of technology can enhance the carrying capacity of the resource base. But ultimate limits there are, and sustainability requires that long before these are reached, the world must ensure equitable access to the constrained resource and reorient technological efforts to relieve the pressure".[1]

7. The following pages try to provide a snapshot picture of the progress achieved in the three dimensions listed above. At the outset, however, a few general remarks are needed on the progress made with regard to the aspiration of bridging different goals and communities. This progress is demonstrable through a review of the evolution of the concept and practice of sustainable development over the years. In practice, this idea has traced a fairly standard trajectory in different countries as well as at the national level. This trajectory comprises three distinct phases with increasing degree of coherence. These phases are:

(a) *The environmental phase (1948-72)*: in the first phase, specific environmental goals begin to be championed by concerned citizens and policy makers, most commonly in the area of pollution abatement. After the publication of Rachel Carson's seminal treatise, *Silent Spring* in 1962, this phase led to a raft of environmental legislation, creation of environmental institutions, and a concerted rise in activism;[2]

(b) *The environment and development phase (1972-2009)*: the environmental phase culminated in 1972, with the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, in which the links between environment and development were first recognized explicitly. Subsequent efforts sought a balance between environment and development, often by analysing trade-offs and proposing ancillary actions (especially finance and technology support) to offset them. This integration was pursued most concretely in the United Nations Conference on

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[1] "Our common future", report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, transmitted to the General Assembly as an annex to document A/42/427 entitled "Development and international co-operation: environment", chap. 2, para. 10.

[2] The date 1948 is chosen to reflect the establishment of perhaps the leading environmental organization of its time, IUCN. It is true, however, that there was a "pre-history" in the form of the wilderness movement, scientific management, and wildlife conservation. However, these were motivated largely by quality of life concerns, unlike the modern sustainability movement, which is motivated in significant part by the threat posed to survival of life, including human life, on the planet.

Environment and Development, which set out the goals in detail in Agenda 21, and initiated the process of conceptualizing sustainable development;

(c) *The sustainable development proper phase (2009-)*: in practice, there has been limited success in bridging the gulf between different agendas. However, for reasons that are laid out below, there are indications of intellectual and policy development that can help to usher in the next phase in this evolution, where the core idea of sustainable development can come into its own. The core idea is not only to integrate and combine environment and development in a synergistic manner, but effectively to mainstream the sustainability considerations into economic and developmental decision-making, and indeed to ensure that all development actions are approached through the prism of sustainability.

8. This pattern is evident in each individual country as well as at the global level. It also shows clearly the signs of progress. While the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was planned as the conference on the human environment, its key message was about the integration of environment and development, which in turn became the title of the Rio Conference. Rio gave substance to the questions that Stockholm had raised two decades earlier. But Rio too was ahead of its time, and it ended up raising its own set of questions about how to mainstream sustainability into development. A first attempt at answering these questions took place a decade later in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, which crafted an agreement on the systematic monitoring of the implementation of Agenda 21, but much more is needed. As will be evident in the progress report contained in tables 1 to 5 below, many trends are pointing in the adverse direction. More importantly, the key question, namely progress in the ability to unify diverse agendas, still remains unanswered.

9. It may also be noted here that policy discussions of governance too have followed the above trajectory, but with a lag. In the first phase of environmental advocacy, there was no discussion of governance; the discussion was mainly on how to fit environmental issues within existing governance systems. Governance issues started mainly in the second phase, when environment and development concerns were brought together, but their focus has remained exclusively on environmental governance. In 2009, the discussion has already taken on the more integrative question of governance for sustainable development.

10. As the twentieth anniversary of the Rio Conference approaches, the combination of economic and climate crises have not only made it urgent to find the answers to Rio's questions, they have in some sense brought the world closer to the answers. The responses to these crises already show signs of the intellectual and political fertility that characterized the five-year period between the publication of the Brundtland Commission report in 1987 and the Rio Conference in 1992. That period produced the frameworks and concepts (e.g., common and differentiated responsibilities, the precautionary principle, the sustainability assessment, sustainable development strategies, footprints, public/private participation, prior informed consent, corporate responsibility, and many others) that continue to guide national and global policy. Likewise, the economic crisis and the economic stimulus packages have led to the articulation of innovative concepts — such as the green new deal and green growth — which are the means of mainstreaming ecological concerns into the very fabric of economic decision-making, and which could lead to a new round of policy innovation.

11. While the financial crisis originated in developed countries, developing countries are being hit hard as well through capital reversals, rising borrowing costs, collapsing world trade and commodity prices, and subsiding remittance flows. In the baseline scenario, world income per capita is expected to fall by 3.7 per cent in 2009 in developed economies, but also in a large number of developing countries. The unprecedented fiscal stimulus packages in developed economies have raised concerns of reduced funds for official development assistance (ODA). In a recent study, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) found that ODA efforts from countries that suffered banking crises declined significantly. Additionally, many donor countries set their aid targets as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP); as GDP falls, aid may follow suit. It is therefore important for the international community to hold itself accountable to its aid commitments to keep the Millennium Development Goals alive and prevent developing countries from losing the progress they have gained thus far, especially since ODA has been increasingly used for health, education and other social purposes.

12. The shortage of affordable financing will also have major repercussions for infrastructure spending, which is critical for longer-term sustainable development. Investments in public and private infrastructure projects in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America declined substantially after various crises and fiscal adjustments in the 1980s and 1990s, while infrastructure investment also dropped substantially after the financial crisis of the late 1990s in East Asia and had not recovered to pre-crisis levels by 2007. Maintaining, constructing or rehabilitating much-needed public infrastructure is critical to sustained development and growth, including by influencing the location of new private sector activities.

13. One innovative response is the idea of a "global green New Deal", which could make a major contribution to reviving the world economy, saving and creating jobs, and protecting vulnerable groups. It should promote sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially ending extreme poverty by 2015. Also, it must reduce carbon dependency and ecosystem degradation — these are key risks along a path to a sustainable world economy. But at the same time significant structural changes are necessary in international and domestic policy architectures. The fiscal stimulus (to be applied over 2009 and 2010) should prioritize energy efficient buildings and investments in sustainable transport and renewable energy. Developing countries should prioritize investment in agricultural productivity measures, freshwater management, and sanitation, as these have demonstrable and exceptional social returns. Domestic policy responses should be based on effective monitoring and accountability and integrate the principles of environmental accounting. International policy architecture needs attention in the areas of trade, aid, carbon pricing and technology and policy coordination. This has also been confirmed in the outcome document of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, where it has been acknowledged that

> "the response to the crisis presents an opportunity to promote green economy initiatives. In this regard, we encourage the utilization of national stimulus packages, for those countries in a position to do so, to contribute to sustainable development, sustainable long-term growth, promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all and poverty eradication. It is important that global green initiatives and proposals be inclusive and address sustainable development and environmental challenges and opportunities including

climate change mitigation and adaptation, financing and technology transfer to developing countries and sustainable forest management" (General Assembly resolution 63/303, para. 32).

14. Besides the financial and economic crisis, minds have been focused also by the urgency of the climate threat. Although it was inevitable that the process of unlimited growth would eventually hit against the finite limits of the biosphere, the climate crisis has arrived perhaps a bit too soon. It might have been far more manageable if it had struck after the major development goals had been achieved and all countries had risen to comparable levels of income and well-being. In that event, the simple application of market instruments to internalize the externality could have led to a gradual abatement of greenhouse gases. However, given that the crisis has arrived at a point when the development agenda is still far from completed, it has necessitated a search for solutions that could integrate climate and development goals. In the future, as other planetary boundaries become binding, they too will necessitate the formal mainstreaming of sustainability into development. However, to repeat the message of the Brundtland Commission report, sustainability requires that long before these ultimate limits are reached, the world must ensure equitable access to the constrained resource and reorient technological efforts to relieve the pressure.

15. For these reasons, the present report is a timely one. In looking back, there is no option but to describe progress or regress on Agenda 21 in a fragmented manner, chapter by chapter, and with separate treatments for environment and development goals, albeit with a number of cross-linkages and connections. But in looking ahead, there are indications of a step jump towards concretizing and identifying the integrated agenda of sustainable development mainstreamed into economic and developmental decision-making.

16. Turning to the progress report, the broad principle of sustainable development was translated into a concrete framework in Agenda 21, with three explicit dimensions: outcomes, institutional capacity, and action. In recent literature, the term "ecological modernization" has been used to describe a society's progress in all three dimensions. The report will follow the following structure:

(a) *Outcomes*: the first dimension refers to the concrete sectoral targets set out in sections I and II of Agenda 21. For ease of reference, the progress report is further subdivided into (i) sustainable human development (covered in section I of Agenda 21); and (ii) conservation and management of resources for development; and (iii) environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, solid wastes and sewage-related issues, and radioactive wastes (the latter two are section II of Agenda 21);

(b) *Institutions and governance*: these goals are covered in section III of Agenda 21, and refer to the evolution of governance capacity, including those of major groups, to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development;

(c) *Actions*: section IV of Agenda 21 is entitled "Means of implementation". It lays out the menu of options available to Governments and the international system to achieve the goals.

17. In each section, an overall succinct assessment is presented in tabular form, elaborated in subsequent paragraphs where needed. The tabular presentation gives a snapshot of the major positive and negative developments on each theme identified

in Agenda 21. It also provides references and links to background papers or external publications, to enable the reader to follow up for more information.

18. The upshot is that in the last 20 years, significant progress has been made in the area of sustainable development. Most national Governments have begun to incorporate sustainable development into their planning and policy. Pro-active businesses across the globe have brought sustainability to their products and processes. Local initiatives have had success in informing citizens on sustainable development. However, in spite of these efforts, putting the principles of sustainable development into practice and achieving a goal of mainstreaming sustainable development into the overall development agenda has proven to be anything but simple or straightforward. This has proven to be even more difficult as the international community is tackling challenges arising from multiple crises.

A. Outcomes

1. Sustainable human development

Table 1
Outcomes in sustainable human development

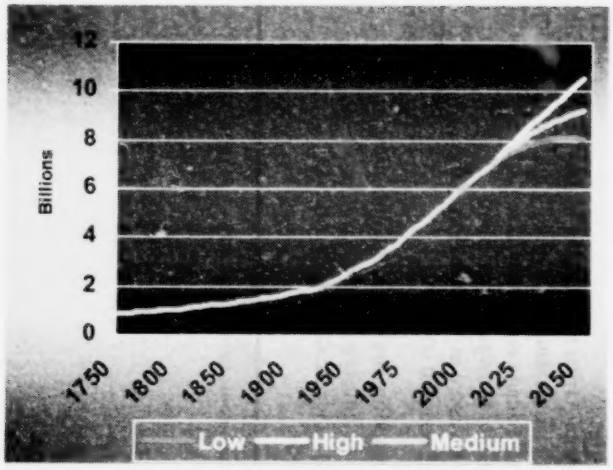
Agenda 21 chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
3	Combating poverty	From 1990 to 2005, the number of people in extreme poverty decreased from 1.8 billion to 1.4 billion. There was a dramatic decline in the poverty rate in Eastern Asia — in large part owing to rapid economic growth in China, which helped lift 475 million people from extreme poverty.	Between 2008 and 2009, the number of people living in extreme poverty — on less than $1.25 a day in 2005 prices — rose from 915 million to 1.02 billion, which is 55 million-90 million higher than the estimates made before the global economic crisis. Many countries are not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, both the number of poor and the poverty rate are expected to increase further. Although the overall poverty rates in the developing world will still fall in 2009, but at a much slower pace than before the downturn.	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2009), United Nations Development Programme (2009), Millennium Development Goals Report 2009

Agenda 21 chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
4	Changing consumption patterns	A number of initiatives have emerged to guide action: (a) analytical constructs, such as the Factor Four and Factor Ten approaches, (b) institutional arrangements, especially corporate responsibility, and (c) the policy process, including under the Marrakech Process and Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production. This process, led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has promoted regional sustainable consumption and production programmes or action plans (in Mauritius, Senegal, Indonesia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Egypt, Mozambique, Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador), national sustainable consumption and production round tables in emerging economies (China, India, Brazil and South Africa),[a] the development of sustainable consumption and production tools, support for capacity-building and project implementation in Africa and Latin America, and task forces for the following areas: cooperation with Africa; sustainable products; sustainable lifestyles; sustainable public procurement; sustainable tourism; sustainable buildings and construction, and education for sustainable consumption.	Global Footprint increased from 1 per cent of available resources in 1990 to 2.7 per cent in 2008.	Global Footprint UNEP Department of Economic and Social Affairs
5	Demographic dynamic and sustainability	Global average population growth rate declined from 2-1.4 per cent per year; fertility declined from over 6 in the 1960s to 3 per woman today; and projection of steady state population level revised downward to 9 billion by 2030 (see figures I and II).	Strictly speaking, sustainability in a finite planet requires a stable population. However, the global population is still growing albeit at a slower rate than in earlier projections. There are currently 6.8 billion people in the world.	United Nations Population Fund (2009)

Agenda 21 chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
6	Protecting and promoting human health conditions	Under-five mortality declined from 93 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 67 in 2007, i.e., from 12.6 million children to around 9 million today, despite population growth.[b] Malaria incidence has declined in 27 countries. The number of HIV-infected people has declined since 1996 to 2.7 million in 2007. AIDS deaths peaked in 2005 at 2.2 million and declined since then to 2 million in 2007. Between 1998 and 2000, 23 countries registered an increase (of two or more years) in life expectancy at birth while 21 countries registered a decline.	Maternal mortality has not declined in developing countries. There are 450 maternal deaths per 100,000 women in developing countries; 88 per cent of deaths due to malaria happen in sub-Saharan Africa. Tuberculosis incidence is rising again, from 8.3 million new cases in 2000 to 9.2 million in 2006 and 9.3 million in 2007. Most of the cases in 2007 occurred in Asia (55 per cent) and Africa (31 per cent).[b]	Millennium Development Goals Report 2009 World Health Organization, 2009
7	Promoting sustainable human settlement development	The percentage of developing country urban population living in slums declined from 50 per cent in 1990 to 36 per cent in 2005. The lives of slum-dwellers have improved in all regions except in sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia. Notable is the increased use of improved water supplies and sanitation in China. In regions where the majority of slum-dwellers suffer from only one shelter deprivation, simple, low-cost interventions could significantly improve conditions.	Sub-Saharan Africa has still the highest prevalence of slums. Improvements in most sub-Saharan African countries will require large multisectoral investments. Slum population increased in Western Asia, largely as a result of war and conflict. Notwithstanding improvements in slums worldwide, the housing and energy crisis may slow progress and, in some cases, reverse positive trends.[c]	Millennium Development Goals Report 2009 United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2009

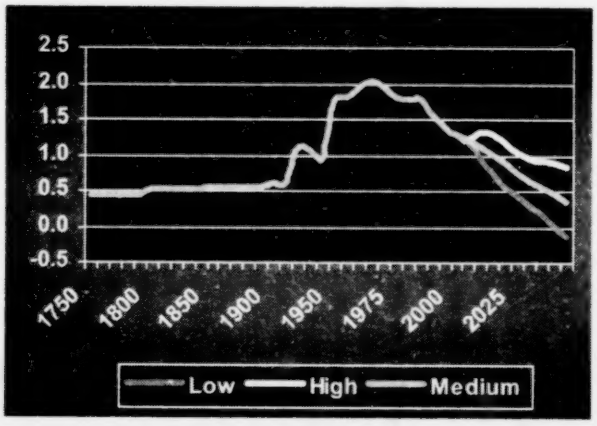
[a] For more information on the national activities and outcomes, see http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/consultations/national.
[b] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, New York, 2009.
[c] Ibid., and UN-Habitat, Annual Report 2008.

Figure I
World population, 1750-2050



Source: Division for Population and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Figure II
Growth rate of world population, 1750-2050



Source: Division for Population and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

2. Conservation and management of resources for development

Table 2
Outcomes in conservation and management of resources for development

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
9	Protection of the atmosphere	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment of the huge climate literature has been welcomed by policymakers. Many countries adopted national climate plans. Pilot programmes in energy efficiency and renewable energy could provide elements of a solution. Investment in renewable energy exceeded that in conventional energy for the first time in 2008. Many cities converted their vehicle fleets to compressed natural gas (CNG). The Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention) will enter into force in October 2009. It will help to identify the largest polluters in communities across Europe. Since 1985, when depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer was recognized as an important problem, efforts have been made to reduce and eliminate the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone depleting substances. By 2003, developed countries had reduced consumption of CFCs by over 99 per cent and developing countries by over 50 per cent. Taking into account the response lags, the CFC concentration in the stratospheric ozone layer will revert to pre-1980 levels by the middle of this century.[a]	GHG emissions are growing at the upper boundary of earlier IPCC projections. Under current trends, emissions will increase by 45 per cent by 2030, which could lead to a 6° C increase in the global average temperature. Kyoto protocol targets are not yet nationally met and there is still no agreement about the next round of Kyoto commitments or cooperative action. Particulate concentrations are still very high in large cities in developing countries whose economies are growing yet are still in the process of introducing pollution control measures. Energy demands grows from 2006-2013 by 45 per cent. Fossil fuels are projected to continue to contribute 80 per cent of energy consumed until 2030.	IPCC IEA — *World Energy Outlook 2008* United Nations Global Compact Annual Review, 2008

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
	Energy	Demand for energy has slowed owing to higher energy prices and slow economic growth, but it is still projected to grow from 2006-2013 by 45 per cent.[b] Fossil fuels will continue to constitute 80 per cent of energy consumed in 2030, even though modern renewable technologies are growing more rapidly than any other source worldwide at an average rate of 7.2 per cent per year. Two thirds of poor households still do not have access to electricity and three quarters do not have access to clean fuels for cooking; the numbers are projected to rise by 2030.[b]	The world energy system is at a crossroads. Current global trends in energy supply and consumption are unsustainable in all three aspects. What is needed to reverse these trends is securing the supply of reliable and affordable energy and effecting a rapid transformation to a low-carbon, efficient, and environmentally benign system of energy supply.	
10	Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources	Several projects in developing countries help to develop and build capacity in cadastre, land administration, secure land tenure, application of advanced technology in land administration, and community development. An example is the World Bank Rural Land Resources Management Programme. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has allocated $332 million in incremental resources to leverage $2.3 billion in co-financing for 88 projects to combat land degradation. At the international level a number of policy options have been adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session.	5.8 million km^2 of land is degraded by deforestation; 6.8 million km^2 by overgrazing; 1.37 million km^2 for fuel wood; 5.5 million km^2 due to agriculture mismanagement; and 195,000 km^2 for industry and urbanization.	Commission on Sustainable Development United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification World Bank FAO GEF, 2009

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
11	Combating deforestation	Between 2000 and 2005, global forest cover declined by 13 million hectares (ha) per year, offset partially by 5.7 million hectares of increased cover (significantly in China). The resulting net annual decline of 7.3 million hectares is lower than 8.9 million hectares lost per year during 1990-2000. Several innovative instruments, including payments for ecosystem services, are being more widely used to protect forests. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) could capture as much as 83.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere between now and 2030.	Deforestation accounts for 35 per cent of carbon emissions in developing countries and 65 per cent in least developed countries.	FAO, *State of the World's Forests*, 2009 Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Division for Sustainable Development, *Trends in sustainable development 2008-2009* United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs *Policy Brief* No. 16, "Forests: the Green and REDD Climate Change" (April 2009)
12	Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought	The most recent analyses indicate a greening of most of the Sahel region since the early 1990s. At the international level a number of policy options have been adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session, including the mainstreaming of national action plans prepared by almost all affected countries into national sustainable development strategies, and strengthening of the knowledge and information base. Over the last three years, the World Food Programme (WFP) invested $300 million in programmes to protect fragile ecosystems, e.g., through the construction or rehabilitation of ponds, wells, irrigation systems and dykes.	Drylands cover roughly 40 per cent of the Earth's land surface and are inhabited by over 2 billion people, approximately one third of the world's population. Sub-Saharan African and Central Asian drylands are among the most vulnerable to climate change, especially the corridor from Mali to Ethiopia. Climate change can heighten the risk of drought and desertification.	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Division for Sustainable Development, *Trends in sustainable development 2008-2009*

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
13	Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development	Mountains cover 25 per cent of the Earth's surface and are home to 12 per cent of the world's population, contribute 50 per cent of the planet's fresh surface water, and host half of 34 global biodiversity hot spots. Protected mountain areas have increased sixfold to eightfold in the last 40 years and cover 11.4 per cent of all mountain area.	Biodiversity in mountains is being threatened by climate change and the unsustainable use of mountain resources, including through deforestation and the pressure of tourism. Some 270 million rural mountain people are at risk of hunger.	FAO International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions
14	Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development	The Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session reached a landmark agreement on investing in a sustainable green revolution, especially in Africa, and especially to assist small farmers and women farmers. The decision includes a call for enhancement of investment (including from the public sector and with ODA support) in agricultural infrastructure, research, extension, and marketing, and for support of scaling up of successful practices. Global crop production in 2008 was 610 million metric tons and is predicted to rise to 656 million in 2009-2010. Government spending on agriculture in developing countries has increased by 3 per cent annually from 1980-2005, especially because of increased allocations (4.5 percent annual growth) in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Global agreements have mobilized financial support for food security, including for the stimulation of agriculture in developing countries. FAO programmes provide technical support for production intensification, as well as responses to price increases.	The 2008 food price increase resulted in an increase in hunger. In many African countries, spending on agriculture is well below the 2003 Maputo Declaration target of 10 per cent of budgetary allocations. The stalled Doha Development Round was expected to open agricultural markets in developed countries to developing country farmers.	FAO International Fund for Agricultural Development Millennium Development Goals Report 2009

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
15-17	Conservation of biological diversity, biotechnology, protection of the oceans	Besides its intrinsic benefits, biodiversity provides such critical services as water management and purification, soil conservation, carbon storage and reduced vulnerability to floods, droughts and landslides. The General Assembly has designated 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. The proposed agreement on an international regime of access and benefit sharing at the forthcoming Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity could help to recompense local communities for their genetic resources, and create incentives for biodiversity conservation. UNEP has facilitated the consultative process to improve science-policy interface for biodiversity. Protected areas are the cornerstone of efforts to conserve species and ecosystems. Only 18 million km^2 of land and 3 million km^2 of territorial waters (totalling 12 per cent of the Earth's land area and 1 per cent of marine area) was under some form of protection by 2008 (see figure III). Aquaculture is the fastest growing animal food-producing sector, outpacing population growth in both production and employment to raise per capita supply by 6.9 per cent annually from 0.7 kg in 1970 to 7.8 kg in 2006.	The World Conservation Union's Red Index List reports that 869 species are extinct or extinct in the wild; this figure rises to 1,159 if the 290 Critically Endangered species tagged as possibly extinct are included. Overall, a minimum of 16,928 species are threatened with extinction. Not all protected areas are properly managed or are able to resist the assault from pollution, climate change, irresponsible tourism, infrastructure development and increasing demands for land and water resources. Sustained investments are needed to effectively conserve biodiversity, both inside and outside of protected areas.[c] Less than 1 per cent of the world's ocean body is protected. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) continues to be active in designating Special Areas under the MARPOL Convention and particularly sensitive sea areas as needed to protect against damage from international shipping. It is also currently developing international measures for minimizing the translocation of invasive aquatic species through biofouling on ships.	Convention on Biological Diversity FAO UN-OCEANS World Conservation Union IMO Millennium Development Goals Report 2009

Agenda 21 Chapter	Title	Positive trends	Negative trends	Source
		GEF has created 26 trust funds totalling more than $300 million to sustain investments in 800 biodiversity projects in 150 countries, creating or managing 1,600 protected areas covering 360 million hectares, incorporating biodiversity protection over more than 100 million hectares of productive lands. Recent advances in food biotechnology, including improvements in industrial process technology and control systems as well as techniques to monitor food safety and nutritional quality, are likely to play an increasingly important role in the food supply, especially in the light of the recent food crisis. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety of 2000 seeks to ensure that technological advances can be utilized while respecting human health and environment. The Protocol enables developing countries to develop biosafety frameworks and associated regulations and policies based on country circumstances and national and sector priorities. FAO provides support for the sustainable use of plant genetic resources and ecosystem services. FAO also provides technical support for limiting the use of pesticides. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) has 750 member organizations in 108 countries. The United Nations World Tourism Organization supports poverty reduction through sustainable tourism, including the Global Baseline Criteria for Sustainable Tourism, the World Heritage Tourism Policy as well as climate change awareness, capacity-building on adaptation and mitigation in the tourism sector.	Marine species are threatened by over-fishing, climate change, invasive species, coastal development and pollution. The percentage of depleted, fully exploited or overexploited and recovering fish species has increased from 70 per cent in 1995 to 80 per cent in 2006. At least 17 per cent of the 1,045 shark and ray species, 12.4 per cent of groupers and six of the seven marine turtle species are threatened with extinction. Of the 845 species of reef building corals, 27 per cent are threatened, and another 20 per cent are near-threatened. 27.5 per cent of marine birds are threatened with extinction, compared with 11.8 per cent of terrestrial birds. A significant proportion of species that are currently not threatened with extinction are susceptible to climate change. This includes 30 per cent of non-threatened birds, 51 per cent of non-threatened corals and 41 per cent of non-threatened amphibians.	

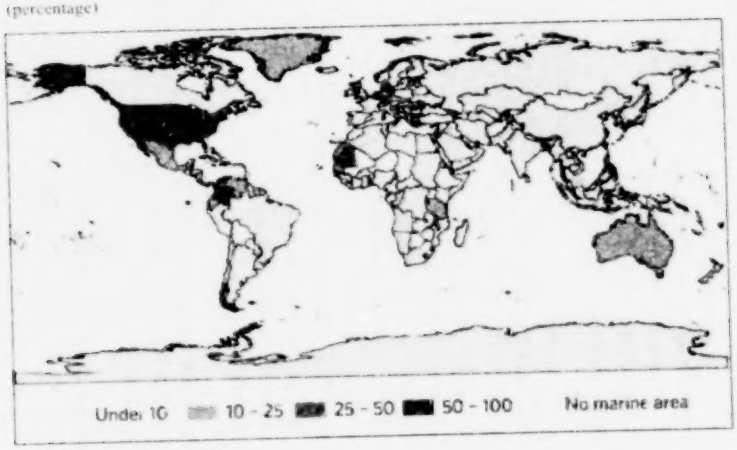
Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
18	Protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources: application of integrated approaches to the development, management and use of water resources	The volume of freshwater resources is around 35 million km^3, or about 2.5 per cent of the total volume of water. Globally, agriculture accounts for 69 per cent of water withdrawals, industry, 23 per cent, and households, 8 per cent. The world is ahead of schedule in meeting the 2015 drinking water target, though some countries still face an uphill battle (see figure IV). The Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session reached a landmark agreement on an integrated management of land and water resources. Scientific developments can assist in the development of long-term and sustainable water resource management strategies. These include nuclear and isotope techniques to accurately assess the size, location and replenishment rate of water resources, and detect pollution in groundwater. Since 2007, hydrology atlases containing tens of thousands of isotope hydrology records for Africa and Asia have been assembled.	Freshwater resources are under increasing pressure owing to population growth, increased economic activity and improved standards of living. This has led to increased competition for and conflicts over the limited freshwater resource. The problems are aggravated by the prevailing sectoral approaches that result in fragmented and uncoordinated actions. 884 million people worldwide rely on unimproved water sources. Of these, 84 per cent (746 million people) live in rural areas. At least 5 million deaths per year can be attributed to waterborne diseases. By 2025, more than 2.8 billion people will live in 48 countries facing water stress or water scarcity. Globally, about 9,000 cubic metres of freshwater is available per person per year. By 2025, this is projected to drop to 5,100 cubic metres.	Commission on Sustainable Development UN-Water Millennium Development Goals Report 2009 International Atomic Energy Agency United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

Agenda 21 Chapter	Title	Positive trends	Negative trends	Source
		Understanding and observing the global water cycle contribute significantly in effective water management, and space technology, primarily Earth observation satellites, plays a major role in supplying data for water studies. Remote-sensing products have wide coverage, which means that investigators can use the information to produce land-use and land-cover maps.	Water is increasingly seen as the key constraint on food production, on a par with, if not more crucial than, land scarcity. Irrigated agriculture accounts for over 70 per cent of global water withdrawals (over 80 per cent in some regions). From 1990 to 2000, the volume of water withdrawn for agricultural increased by 8 per cent. Even with an estimated additional 15-20 per cent irrigation water over the next 25 years — which is probably on the low side — serious conflicts could arise between water for irrigated agriculture and water for other human and ecosystem uses.[d]	

[a] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, New York, 2009; and UN-Habitat, Annual Report 2008.
[b] International Energy Agency, OECD/IEA, World Energy Outlook, 2008, Paris, 2008.
[c] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, New York, 2009.
[d] Integrated Water Resource Management, Global Water Partnership, Technical Advisory Committee.

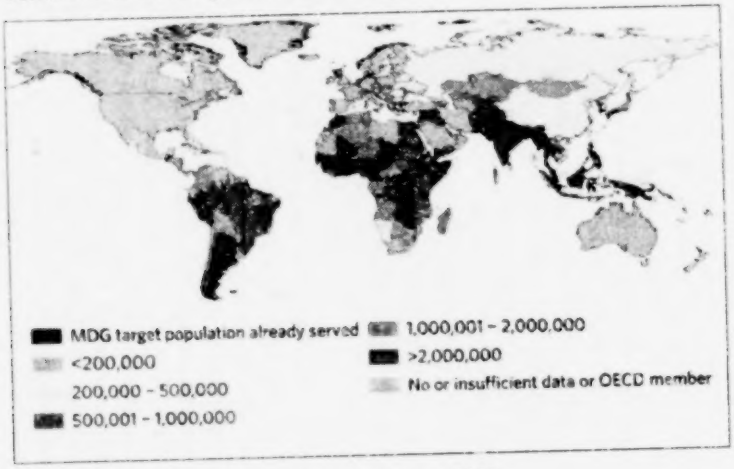
Figure III
Proportion of marine areas protected, 2008

(percentage)



Source: Millennium Development Goals Report 2009.

Figure IV
Population needing improved drinking water to meet Millennium Development Goals target



Source: Millennium Development Goals Report 2009.

3. Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, solid wastes and sewage-related issues and radioactive wastes

Table 3
Outcomes in environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals and wastes

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
19-22	Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, solid wastes and sewage-related issues and radioactive wastes	For hazardous wastes, solid wastes and sewage-related issues emphasis has shifted from remedial measures to prevention, but still a lot needs to be done in reduction at source, reuse, recycling and recovery. The International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides has been revised. National implementation plans under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants are being developed. GEF allocated $340 million for measures to reduce human and environmental exposure to such pollutants, leveraging an additional $474 million. A lot of best practices are promoted at the national and international level regarding chemicals. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, together with the IAEA international Safety Standards, provide a framework for safety at the international level in the area of spent fuel management and storage of spent fuel for 436 nuclear power plants operating in 30 countries with another 45 plants currently under construction. IAEA provides assistance in the safe handling of used radioactive sources typically used in medical applications. It has trained regional and national teams to perform conditioning and transport operations for different types of disused sealed sources.	There is lack of sufficient scientific information for the risk assessment of chemicals. Despite the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade many developing countries lack national legislation regarding pesticides. Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal face challenges in reducing the quantity of hazardous wastes, in minimizing their generation and in managing the residual amounts to protect human health and the environment. The critical challenge is to integrate responses to global threats from hazardous wastes into social and economic development polices at the international, national and local levels. An important safety issue for radioactive waste is how to establish the safety of the facilities for the long term. More than 60 countries are considering the nuclear power option in their future energy portfolio.	UNIDO Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants FAO Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal IAEA UNEP

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
	Air pollution	The main human sources of particulate matter are power plants, industry, vehicles, household cooking and heating fuels, construction and waste incinerators. Particularly high concentrations of suspended particulates are found in countries relying on coal for energy. Since about 1970, in developed countries, and more recently in developing countries, particulate air pollution has been reduced by particulate control systems on power plants and industrial facilities, use of cleaner fuels such as natural gas, and requirements for catalytic converters on vehicles. Nonetheless, particulate concentrations are still very high in large cities in developing countries whose economies are growing yet are still in the process of introducing pollution control measures.[a]		

[a] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, *Trends in Sustainable Development 2006-2007* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.II.A.1).

A/64/275

19. Generally, some progress has been achieved in the abatement of air pollution and the management of waste, especially hazardous waste. Still, many problems remain.

20. The 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal came into force in May 1992. Despite the progress to date, parties to the Basel Convention still face enormous challenges in reducing the quantity of hazardous wastes, in minimizing their generation and in managing the residual amounts in a way to protect human health and the environment. The critical challenge is to integrate responses to global threats from hazardous wastes into social and economic development polices at the international, national and local levels. This can be done by raising awareness of impacts, by linking or coordinating the policymaking process across the international, national and local levels, and by coordinating planning and budget allocations at the national, local or sectoral level.

21. The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, whose secretariat functions are entrusted jointly to FAO and UNEP, entered into force on 24 February 2004, but continuing challenges include the fact that, in many developing countries, national legislation is not widely enforced owing to lack of technical expertise and resources.

22. While industrial development is important for economic growth, poorly managed industrialization can cause air and water pollution and hazardous waste problems. A number of programmes have been led by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to shift towards a cleaner production system. These include the elimination of hydrofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and other ozone-depleting substances. In partnership with GEF, UNIDO oversaw the preparation of many of the initial national implementation plans under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and reduction and control of the use of mercury in small-scale mining.

23. Similarly, with regard to the management of chemicals in agriculture, FAO advocates integrated pest management as the preferred strategy. In order to combat the widespread contamination of soil and water resources, FAO has revised and updated the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides for pesticide management, and has awareness and generated action on obsolete pesticides in affected countries and regions.

24. The world's nuclear power plants generate spent fuel from the production of electricity in some 30 countries. All of the spent fuel is stored on-site or off-site in engineered storage facilities, pending final decisions on its disposition. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, together with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) international Safety Standards may be seen as providing a framework for safety at the international level in the area of spent fuel management. An important safety issue is how to establish the safety of the facilities for long-term storage of spent fuel. There must be confidence in the continued integrity of the fuel, its container, and the structure of the waste store. IAEA is supporting international research of monitoring, inspection and other components of safe

management practices. Safety Standards on spent fuel management also are being reviewed and elaborated to cover a wider scope of activities.[3]

25. IAEA has continued its work regarding sustainability issues surrounding nuclear energy development including climate change and nuclear power. It also runs programmes in the marine and terrestrial environments in areas such as the detection and fate of radio-pollutants in oceanic and coastal zones.

26. Environmentally sound solid waste management must go beyond the mere safe disposal or recovery of wastes that are generated and seek to address the root cause of the problem by attempting to change unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. In this regard, it is necessary to minimize wastes, maximize environmentally sound waste reuse and recycling, promote environmentally sound waste disposal and treatment and extend waste service coverage. This also means achieving the sanitation target. In 2006, 2.5 billion people worldwide were still unserved. The greatest challenge is in Southern Asia, where 580 million people are without improved sanitation.[4]

B. Institutions and governance

27. The present section reviews progress on the elements of Agenda 21 that pertain to governance and institutions. It covers the institutional structures developed at international levels to oversee the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as the role and contributions of major groups. A summary table follows the section (table 4).

28. International institutional arrangements are essential for sustainable development. Each year, the General Assembly considers sustainable development as part of its development agenda. It considers a number of issues from overall progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the three Rio Conventions and UNEP, to sustainable mountain development and new and renewable sources of energy; Member States give direction to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its upcoming session.

29. At its 2009 substantive session, held in Geneva from 6 to 31 July, the Economic and Social Council focused its third annual ministerial review on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health.

30. The coordination segment focused on the follow-up to the 2008 Ministerial Declaration on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development. A resolution was also adopted in which the United Nations system was requested to support the developing countries in achieving sustainable development goals.

31. The Economic and Social Council adopted a ministerial declaration on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health. The Ministers underlined their commitment to strengthening health

[3] IAEA, Radioactive waste management, Issue brief.

[4] United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009.

systems that deliver equitable health outcomes as a basis of a comprehensive approach.

32. The Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session, a policy session, adopted a set of practical measures and policy options[5] to speed up agricultural development, address drought, desertification, land use, rural development and Africa as well as interlinkages and cross-cutting issues, including means of implementation. A set of adopted policy options had placed agriculture and rural development at the heart of the sustainable development agenda and showed that a paradigm shift was required to ensure lasting development for all.

33. The five regional commissions contributed to the policy discussions during the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting. Representatives of the five regional commissions addressed, from a regional perspective, policy options and possible actions to expedite implementation in the five thematic areas of: agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa.

34. Prior to the seventeenth session of the Commission, three intersessional meetings were organized by the Division for Sustainable Development; one in Bangkok, from 28 to 30 January 2009 (see E/CN.17/2009/13 and E/CN.17/2009/16) was a capacity-development workshop for improving agricultural productivity, water use efficiency and rural livelihoods. The other was in Windhoek, on 9 and 10 February 2009 on the theme "African agriculture in the twenty-first century: meeting the challenges, making a sustainable green revolution" (see E/CN.17/2009/14 and E/CN.17/2009/15). The third was held at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies based on Kibbutz Ketura in Israel from 22 to 30 March 2009, on developing practical methods of reversing trends of soil degradation (see E/CN.17/2009/17).

35. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has provided technical and financial support to the African Union/African Ministerial Conference on the Environment processes on the preparation and adoption of an African Common Negotiating Position on Climate Change towards the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties. Within the framework of the African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, ECA continues to play an important role in the implementation of the African Union/ECA/African Development Bank Joint Initiative on Land Policy in Africa. The Pan-African Land Policy Framework and Guidelines, which constitute significant outputs of the Initiative, were adopted at a Joint Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture, Land and Livestock in April 2009 and endorsed at the African Union Summit of July 2009.

36. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) supports the "Environment for Europe" process to tackle environmental challenges. It has established a privately managed equity fund that will target energy efficiency and renewable energy investment projects in 12 countries in Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The Joint ECE/Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Eurostat Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development has issued a report entitled "Measuring Sustainable Development", which was

[5] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 9*, chap. I.B, resolution 17/1.

published in March 2009.[6] Regarding transportation, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations is developing common methodologies, test cycles and measurement methods for vehicles, including for carbon dioxide emissions. Regarding reducing air pollution, there is ongoing work under the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, which is integrating strategies to curb air pollution while simultaneously mitigating climate change to achieve cost savings.

37. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) initiated a series of studies in selected countries on the economics of climate change. Regional studies and project implementation on urban sustainable infrastructure were initiated in coordination with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as well as the implementation of a project on the sustainability of regional megacities in six countries of the region. It has updated and upgraded a database on economic, social and environmental variables and indicators for improving the assessment of progress towards sustainable development.

38. In 2008, ESCAP enhanced the understanding of the issues relating to balancing energy security and climate change towards sustainable "low carbon" development while in 2009 the focus was on the issue of food security and sustainable agriculture in response to the multiple crises. It has also continued to promote green growth, which, as a result, has a number of countries in the Asia and the Pacific region adopting green growth policies, programmes and institutions.

39. Towards achieving the protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized an expert group meeting on the application of indicators and indices for water quality management in the ESCWA region. ESCWA has also prepared a study entitled "Towards sustainable patterns of production and consumption of water resources in the Arab region". It has also organized a workshop on negotiations and dispute resolution over international shared watercourses. It has contributed to the development of an Arab framework action plan for mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts through the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

40. There are a number of legal instruments and mechanisms that have entered into force since the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm in 1972. UNEP has been established, as well as the three Rio Conventions[7] and the Commission on Sustainable Development. Increasing attention has been paid to the identification and elaboration of concepts and principles in international law related to sustainable development, based on the principles of the Rio Declaration. This could have practical consequences, for example, in facilitating and stimulating the development of new legal instruments and in the implementation, interpretation and harmonization of existing instruments. Increasingly, the principles of the Rio Declaration are also being reflected in national laws.

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[6] Available from http://www.unece.org/stats/publications/Measuring_sustainable_development.pdf.

[7] The Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

41. There has also been increasing recognition of the special situation of developing countries and their differentiated responsibilities. International legal instruments and mechanisms support the need for assistance, including, for example, funding for participation in the negotiation of international legal instruments and for participation in the meetings of treaty bodies after signing and ratification. These treaties often provide for technology transfer and cooperation, financial resources and the creation or designation of a financial mechanism for the implementation of the treaty.

42. However, even though the development of international law for sustainable development has been furthered by the negotiation of new integrative instruments, and the adoption and implementation of others, at the national level, the implementation of international treaties in the area of sustainable development through national legislation remains piecemeal. Integrative and participatory strategies need to be further developed. The lack of secure, sustained and predictable financial resources, insufficient institutional capacity and human resources and inadequate access to technologies may hinder implementation and compliance with international legal instruments. It is also perceived that the unprecedented rate at which new international legal instruments are being adopted exceeds capacity to implement these instruments.

43. Complete compliance with international treaties on sustainable development has not been attained. Factors contributing to this deficiency include a lack of political will, the unavailability of sufficient financial means, a lack of full understanding of the exact obligations of the instrument, and the compressed time schedule of many negotiations. It may be only after an instrument has been negotiated and signed that the full range of consequences, including the need for financial and technical resources, emerges. Another constraint resulting in inadequate use of funds may arise from the lack of coordination at the national level, between the national and the local level, and among ministries themselves. Clashing competencies, indistinct responsibilities and vagueness about the source, goal and amount of financial obligations may hamper implementation and compliance.

44. There is also an increasing trend of involving civil society in the implementation of legal instruments especially the scientific community since environmentally oriented international legal instruments rely increasingly on scientific findings. Thus, various international legal instruments have set up scientific and/or technical bodies. They have been challenged to draw upon the work of the wider scientific community, including other intergovernmental forums, and to have their expertise so integrated as to guide the policy of their respective convention bodies.

45. Development of indicators of sustainable development is another important task as they are needed to increase focus on sustainable development and assist decision-makers at all levels to adopt sound national sustainable development policies. The third, revised set of Commission on Sustainable Development indicators was finalized in 2006 by a group of experts from developing and developed countries and international organizations. The revised edition contains 96 indicators, including a subset of 50 core indicators.[8]

[8] Guidelines on indicators and their detailed methodology sheets can be accessed at http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_ind/ind_index.shtml.

Major groups

46. The nine major groups enhanced their coordination efforts in 2009 by developing Priorities for Action[9] and launching several policy initiatives.[10] Representatives of major groups participated in a number of regional meetings that provided direct inputs to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventeenth session, and their presence on Government delegations during meetings of the Commission has increased.[11]

47. Over 600 representatives from 118 organizations participated in all official segments at the seventeenth session of the Commission open to their participation, contributing more than 29 interventions in Plenary. They were active in three ministerial round tables as both participants and expert panellists. Major groups participated in 60 different side events and 20 other related activities. Additionally, approximately 60 official coordination meetings were held by major groups during the seventeenth session of the Commission.[12]

48. Corporate social responsibility has become a central element of corporate image in the global economy, where companies source raw materials and components through global supply chains. A growing number of companies are adopting voluntary initiatives to ensure good working conditions and environmental performance throughout their supply chains, as well as good relations with workers, consumers, shareholders, communities, activists and other stakeholders. Corporate social responsibility programmes include codes of conduct, environmental management systems, stakeholder dialogues, community investment and philanthropy, and reporting, auditing and certification. The United Nations Global Compact is one example of a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative to promote corporate responsibility in the fields of human rights, labour standards, environment and corruption. Launched in 2000, the initiative now has over 5,000 business participants in 135 countries.[13]

Scientific community

49. Space technologies, such as remote sensing, satellite communications, satellite navigations and positioning technology, and space-derived information, coupled with advances in mobile communication and expansion of the Internet, play an important role in transport systems planning and management, including roads planning, routing, transportation safety and accident avoidance, traffic management, emergency assistance, vehicle location and monitoring, cargo tracking and recovery, revenue collection, and development of intelligent transport systems.

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[9] The official document submitted by major groups to the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of the Commission, which can be found at http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/627/88/PDF/N0862788.pdf?OpenElement.

[10] These include Farming First and Urban-Rural Partnerships for Food Security and Vibrant Markets. For details, visit: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_mg/mg_csd17.shtml.

[11] Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden all included youth representatives on their delegations in 2009, and other delegations included representatives of women, NGOs workers and trade unions, business and industry, and farmers.

[12] Major groups' statements and interventions can be found on the official statements web page of the Commission, or by accessing the individual major groups' sectors web pages.

[13] United Nations Global Compact Annual Review 2008, March 2008.

50. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has developed projects to enhance National Meteorological and Hydrological Services' capacities in supporting early warning systems It continues to improve tropical cyclone and related flood and storm surge forecasts and warnings through regionally coordinated systems.

51. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs offers space technology and its applications for monitoring and conducting assessments of the environment and managing the use of natural resources such as Earth observation systems, meteorological satellites, satellite communications and satellite navigation and positioning systems.

52. Satellite data are useful to predict land surface changes and to make recommendations for appropriate and effective interventions for sustainable land management. Satellite imagery can be used to make an inventory of previous landslides and to collect data on relevant parameters concerning, among other things, soil, geology, slope, geomorphology, land use, hydrology and faults. Space tools are also fast becoming vital in measuring the level of air pollution and monitoring and observing the atmosphere and its interaction with the Earth.

53. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs also helps with its global navigation satellite systems in providing precise vehicle location information on the ground, sea or air.

Partnerships

54. At the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the secretariat organized a Partnerships Fair, as part of the official programme of work, in order to provide registered partnerships and other participants an opportunity to discuss the important contribution of these initiatives to support the implementation of intergovernmentally agreed sustainable development goals and commitments (see http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_par/par_index.shtml).

55. There is an increasing recognition that further efforts should be devoted to advancing and mainstreaming the partnership-based approach to development. There is also a growing interest in building on the concrete added value that voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnership initiatives bring to implementation, and in further scaling up and replicating partnership contributions and best practices.

56. Lessons learned from the use of partnerships as a sustainable development implementation mechanism include: the increased recognition of the contribution of local actors where a partnership's effectiveness is tested on the ground; the increased effectiveness in development cooperation frameworks and enhancement of national sustainable development efforts; the promotion and facilitation of corporate social responsibility efforts by private sector partners; and the importance of Governments to continue to play a key role in fostering partnerships as the complexity of the development challenges will continue to test the ability of Governments to muster the necessary resources and capacities to confront them.

Table 4
Outcomes in institutions and governance

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
23-32	Women, youth, indigenous, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological community, farmers	Sustainable development has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number and sophistication of major groups. Of the major groups accredited to the Economic and Social Council, the number of those which are active in the sustainable development has doubled from 1,152 in 1992 to 2,150 in 2008. Of these, the largest number are NGOs (1,427), followed by children and youth groups (162), women's groups (158) and the scientific community (157)[a]. Several sustainable development networks have come into existence, including the Sustainable Development ListServe, operated jointly by the Division for Sustainable Development and the International Institute for Sustainable Development. Several networks of civic entrepreneurship have been established, including, e.g., the Social Enterprise Coalition, Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, the Skoll Foundation, the Omidyar Network, the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Root Cause, the Canadian Social Entrepreneurship Foundation, New Profit Inc., Echoing Green. Their rationale is often to trigger large scale social change in line with their defining vision, through interventions at various stages of policy process, e.g., by acting as policy monitors, policy advocates, policy innovators and service providers.[b] As of June 2009, a total of 346 partnerships had voluntarily registered with the secretariat of the Commission for Sustainable Development.		ISO 14000 Department of Economic and Social Affairs — NGO Branch Division for Sustainable Development

Agenda 21 Chapter	Title	Positive trends	Negative trends	Source
		According to ISO 14000 (environmental management systems) which was established in 1996, up to the end of December 2007, at least 154,572 certificates had been issued in 148 countries and economies. This represents 21 per cent increase over 2006.		
		Sustained industrial development has been a major contributor to economic growth and poverty reduction over the past half century, notably in Asia. Corporate social responsibility is on the rise. The Global Compact has over 5,000 business participants in 135 countries.		
		The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its seventeenth session introduced several innovative approaches in its organization of work regarding major groups, including ministerial dialogues with major groups and the policy research community. A noteworthy outcome is the formation of a "Sustainable Development Knowledge Partnership" to mobilize intellectual resources in support of global and national policies and actions on sustainable development.		

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
37-40	National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building in developing countries, international institutional arrangements, international legal instruments and mechanisms, information for decision-making	A number of tools for analysis have been developed for decision-making, such as environmental impact assessment and progress measurement, vulnerability assessments, risk assessments, scenario analysis, hot-spot analysis as well as integrated planning and management of, for example, energy and water. Progress includes: a wider involvement of non-State actors; a deeper understanding in the international community of capacity-development issues; more focus on the demands of users; improved aid coordination and donor collaboration; more capacity investments on regional and global levels; and a greater role for information technology in capacity-building. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development all give normative directions in sustainable development. The Commission is the high body for sustainable development in the United Nations system and it has been adopting decisions for better implementation of sustainable development and its mainstreaming into overall international and national development agendas; international legal instruments are also being developed even though progress is mixed, e.g., the Kyoto Protocol and post-Kyoto talks. Indicators both at the international and national levels for sustainable development have been developed, data collection has been improved, but it still lacks in some areas, and information networks are also being established. The third, revised set of Commission on Sustainable Development indicators was finalized in 2006 by a group of experts from developing and developed countries and international organizations. The revised edition contains 96 indicators, including a subset of 50 core indicators.	Complete compliance with international treaties on sustainable development has not been attained. Factors contributing to this deficiency include a lack of political will, the unavailability of sufficient financial means, a lack of full understanding of the exact obligations of the instrument, and the compressed time schedule of many negotiations.	Commission on Sustainable Development Division for Sustainable Development UNEP

[a] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the integrated Civil Society Organizations (iCSO) System.

[b] Banuri T., Najam A., *Civic Entrepreneurship*, Vol. I, Stockholm Environment Institute, 2002.

C. Actions in international cooperation and means of implementation

57. Progress made in capacity-building in support of Agenda 21 can be summarized as follows: greater national capacities for designing national plans, a wider involvement of non-State actors, a deeper understanding in the international community of capacity-development issues, more focus on the demands of users, improved aid coordination and donor collaboration, more capacity investments on regional and global levels, and a greater role for information technology in capacity-building (see table 5).

Table 5
Actions in international cooperation and means of implementation

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
2	International cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries	The Centre for Global Development identifies seven domains of international cooperation for development: aid, trade, investment, migration, environment, security, and technology. Progress in these seven areas has been mixed. In 2008, total net ODA from members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) rose by 10.2 per cent to $119.8 billion. An OECD survey of donors' forward spending plans suggests an 11 per cent increase in programmed aid between 2008 and 2010. During 2008, the network of international investment agreements continued to expand, although the number of bilateral investment treaties concluded in 2008 (59) was lower than in 2007 (65). The number of newly concluded double taxation treaties (75) and other international agreements with investment provisions (16) exceeded those for 2007 (69 and 13, respectively). The Commission on Sustainable Development is promoting a sustainable development agenda, but implementation is still intermittent.	Throughout the 1990s, ODA declined from a "high" of 0.33 per cent of total gross national product of DAC member countries in 1990 to a low of 0.22 per cent in 1997. Global foreign direct investment (FDI) peaked in 2007 at a record $1.9 trillion. It fell by roughly 15 per cent in 2008, but most of the brunt was borne by advanced economies. 2009 will also see a decline in FDI for developing countries. International migration has long been a central tool in the battle against global poverty and inequality, but restrictions are growing and migration is on decline as well as remittances, which in 2004, were estimated by IMF to be $126 billion. In several emigration countries, remittances largely exceeded the volume of ODA, and in certain cases even FDI. In fragile, post-conflict states strained relations between military and civil authorities often have negative effect on development.	The Centre for Global Development only compares the commitments; it does not provide a secular trend of increase. In some areas this cooperation has been better than in some others. OECD/DAC, 2009 UNCTAD, 2009 Millennium Development Goals Report 2008

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
8	Integrating environment and development in decision-making	82 Member States have reported to the Commission on Sustainable Development on implementing a national sustainable development strategy in 2007. This corresponds to 43 per cent of all countries, and 79 per cent of all countries for which information is available. Two non-Member States (Cook Islands and Niue) also reported implementing a national sustainable development strategy. This is a 19 per cent increase since 2006. 16 countries reported that they are developing national sustainable development strategies. Many, but not most, countries have charged planning or development ministries with the oversight of integrated strategies. A number of tools for integrated water resource management and integrated energy planning have been deployed.	A large number of countries are still in the preparatory stage and a number of them have not reported on national sustainable development strategies. Six countries reported they do not have a national sustainable development strategy. Most countries have not integrated sustainable development in their overall development agenda. An effective feedback mechanism — including monitoring, learning and adaptation, is in place only in a few countries. The vision and objectives created through a national sustainable development strategy process are in most countries still not sufficiently linked to national budget expenditures or revenue-generating processes. Progress in implementation of environmentally related fiscal reform (e.g., ecological taxes, subsidy reform, user fees) remains slow, despite general support to such instruments in many national sustainable development strategies.	Department for Sustainable Development, 2009

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
33	Financial resources and mechanisms	See chapters 1 and 2 for ODA, FDI. Global Green New Deal, an investment of 1 per cent of global GDP over the next two years, could provide the critical mass of green infrastructure needed to seed a significant greening of the global economy. An aid-for-trade initiative to help low-income countries penetrate global markets: in 2007, as was the case in 2006, aid for trade grew by more than 10 per cent in real terms and total new commitments from bilateral and multilateral donors reached $25.4 billion, with an additional $27.3 billion in non-concessional trade-related financing. GEF has invested over the past 18 years $8.6 billion directly and leveraged $36.1 billion in co-financing for more than 2,400 projects in more than 165 countries.	World gross product is forecast to fall by more than 2.6 per cent in 2009. World income per capita is expected to fall by 3.7 per cent in 2009 in developed economies, but also in a large number of developing countries. The financial crisis and ensuing recession will inhibit the capacity of developing countries to use counter-cyclical policy to stimulate their economies. For many developing countries, the impacts of the crisis include loss of export revenues, diminished access to trade finance, reductions in export-oriented and infrastructure investment, lower fiscal revenues and balance-of-payment problems (General Assembly resolution 63/303). A more prolonged global recession is probable.	World global outlook 2009
34	Transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building	In the 1990s, most of the work on environmentally sound technologies focused on the development and transfer of technologies for removing harmful substances from emissions and effluents and treating them or disposing of them safely. However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the focus shifted to cleaner production, reducing or eliminating the generation of harmful substances in the production.		GEF, 2009

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
		Since 1991, GEF has allocated $2.5 billion to support more than 30 climate-friendly technologies in more than 50 developing countries, generating an estimated $15 billion in co-financing. GEF has provided funding for technology needs assessments and other enabling and capacity-building activities in more than 100 countries throughout the world. Several international environmental agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Montreal Protocol to the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, include provisions for new and additional financial assistance to support the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.		
35	Science for sustainable development	The scientific community has done a lot in the area of establishing institutions, in professional assessment available to general public, in developing tools for analysis (environmental impact assessment, indicators, vulnerability analysis, risk assessment, hot-spots analysis, scenarios analysis, valuation techniques) as well as integrated planning and management of water, land use, energy. The scientific basis for decision-making on sustainable development has been strengthened by the establishment of a number of institutes and think tanks (e.g., in Bangladesh, Canada, China, Germany, India, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States).		

Agenda 21 Chapter	*Title*	*Positive trends*	*Negative trends*	*Source*
		Another innovation from the scientific community is the role of professional assessments of the policy literature. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is such an example.		
36	Promoting education, public awareness and training	The Bonn Declaration from The World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development asks UNESCO to support Member States and other partners in the implementation of the Declaration, particularly through upstream capacity-building and policy advice on the development of coherent national strategies, monitoring and evaluation, recognizing and sharing good practices on education for sustainable development, advocacy and global partnership development, with due consideration to post-conflict and least developed countries. 28 universities in the United States, 2 in Canada and 2 in Australia offer degrees and courses in sustainable development. UNEP launched the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities Partnership programme. A number of networks have been established such as Sustainable Development Communications Network, World Bank Sustainable Development Network, Sustainable Development ListServe. United Nations University has established the Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development and has facilitated the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net) in Asia and the Pacific. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research organizes training programmes on sustainable development.		UNESCO, 2009 UNEP, 2009 United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2009 United Nations University, 2009

III. Views of Member States regarding a high-level event on sustainable development

58. In paragraph 5 of resolution A/63/212, the General Assembly "invites Member States to express their views on the possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development, and requests the Secretary-General to include views expressed in the report on this agenda item". A number of groups of States and individual Member States have expressed their views.

59. A group of States and several individual Member States (the Sudan, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Azerbaijan, Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Mauritius, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Somalia, South Africa, Tunisia and Turkey) support the convening of a high-level event on sustainable development in 2012 on the grounds that it would provide the appropriate high-level political forum for an overall review and appraisal of obstacles faced and progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, and identifying measures and creative approaches to overcome the barriers in implementation. These States also support the offer of the Government of Brazil to host the high-level meeting.

60. Some Member States (the Czech Republic, on behalf of the European Union, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Mexico and Switzerland) have expressed an open view on this proposal, but have not proposed a particular year when it should take place; they underline that the proposal merits further discussion in order to ensure that any such event takes into account the effective conclusion of the current multi-year programme of work agreed to at the Commission on Sustainable Development, the successful conclusion of other current key multilateral initiatives, and avoidance of overlap and duplication of existing mechanisms and assessment of resource implication.

61. Some Member States (Iceland, Japan and Switzerland) state the need for such a high-level event to be able to deliver tangible results and facilitate implementation of sustainable development strategies, policies and actions, and in this regard to find ways to further strengthen the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development to review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and to strengthen its analytical and information base in the context of the reform of the United Nations.

62. One Member State (the United States) advocates holding a high-level event in 2017, on the grounds that according to a decision in Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61, which was agreed in 2003 at the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the international community already anticipates an overall appraisal of the outcomes of the previous world summits on sustainable development, at the end of the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2017.

63. Most Member States have not gone into details about the preparatory process for the high-level event, but have stated that a preparatory process, including modalities for negotiations, should be decided upon by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, taking into account the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development with a view to avoiding duplication of work.

64. However, three Member States (Brazil, South Africa and Tunisia) provide some detail on the high-level event. One State (Brazil) has proposed four areas for discussion at the 2012 high-level event: (a) review of implementation; (b) international governance for sustainable development; (c) global pact around the "green economy"; and (d) water. Regarding the outcomes, it proposed the following: (a) a comprehensive political declaration that would indicate new areas of convergence and consolidate the international consensus on the paradigm of "green economy"; to recall and reaffirm Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; identify gaps and propose actions for bridging them and (b) a plan of action for the achievement of the objectives set forth by the Conference, including with regard to the implementation of the "green economy" paradigm. Regarding the preparatory process, it stated that the preparatory process should go beyond the establishment of national commissions for the review of implementation of Agenda 21. The process should identify additional mechanisms for further implementing the commitments. It also envisages that the Commission on Sustainable Development should act as a Preparatory Committee for the "Rio+20" Conference.

65. The second proposal (South Africa) states that the objectives of such a high-level event should be (a) taking stock on the implementation of Agenda 21 and targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and specifically the previous cycles of the Commission on Sustainable Development; (b) re-examining how best to achieve sustainable development in the current global context regarding multiple crises and also to focus on technology for sustainable development and sustainable consumption and production; and (c) taking stock of the process to assess whether sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development are used effectively.

66. The third (Tunisia) proposes including the following topics at the high-level event: greater effectiveness in and strengthening of the mechanisms for implementing Agenda 21; strengthening the participation of major groups in sustainable development, especially women and youth; development and defence of decent livelihoods in all regions, including heavily populated urban areas; greater inclusion of climate change considerations in development plans and policies in all countries; greater emphasis on development of mechanisms to ensure global stability and further measures for the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and outcomes of the Doha Review Conference on financing for development in 2008.

67. In summary, there are three views on this proposal. First, a number of Member States would like to have a high-level event on sustainable development to take place in 2012 in Brazil as a high-level political forum for an overall review and appraisal of obstacles faced, progress achieved and for identifying measures and creative approaches to bridge the implementation gaps. Secondly, some Member States maintain an open view about having a high-level event on sustainable development, but they did not specify which year it should be held and underlined that any such event needs to take into account the effective conclusion of the current multi-year programme of work agreed to at the Commission on Sustainable Development on current key multilateral initiatives. Thirdly, one State believes that a high-level event should take place in 2017 at the end of the Commission's multi-year work programme.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

68. **Implementation of sustainable development principles, goals and policies is continuing at all levels, but the current multiple crises as well as climate change have demonstrated that taking an integrated and holistic approach, with an emphasis on interlinkages, ensuring broad participation in implementation by all stakeholders, and developing a practical focus on specific measures are essential in order to expedite implementation of sustainable development goals. Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups, including industry and business, should stay on this track while aiming for accelerated progress.**

69. **To that end, it is recommended that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Call upon Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups to deepen their commitments to sustainable development by redoubling their efforts to implement Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;**

(b) **Call upon Governments to continue providing their support to the Commission on Sustainable Development and to organize intersessional activities, taking into account the thematic cluster of issues considered by the Commission in 2010-2011 and to emphasize the importance of a consensus outcome and action-oriented policy sessions;**

(c) **Call on Governments to continue providing their support to the Commission on Sustainable Development and, in this regard, to contribute to the Commission's trust fund in support of enhanced participation of representatives of developing countries and representatives of major groups in the work of the Commission;**

(d) **Invite the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to continue monitoring, through its High-Level Committee on Programmes, the operational efficiency and effectiveness of inter-agency collaborative mechanisms, including UN-Energy, UN-Water, UN-Oceans and other collaborative arrangements, in the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development;**

(e) **Invite Governments to continue discussing a possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development in order to reach a consensus;**

(f) **Call upon donor Governments and international financial institutions to support developing countries in the areas of transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and a Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns;**

(g) **Encourage Governments, in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations system and major groups, including business and industry, as appropriate, to consider enhancing the implementation and increasing the effectiveness of national sustainable development strategies including through development cooperation frameworks through the use of voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships as well as through shared learning and an exchange of experiences and best practices.**